

## Rhode Island Diploma System Technical Assistance Bulletin

*Rhode Island Department of Education*

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### Explanation and Considerations for Use

The Technical Assistance Bulletin describes in detail the criteria and requirements of the Rhode Island Diploma System, including the requirements for school-wide diploma assessments (exhibitions, portfolios and the CIM). This technical assistance bulletin will be useful to schools as they determine the components, design, and implementation plan for their exhibition systems.

**This is a guidance document issued by the Rhode Island Department of Education. Rhode Island schools should consider it carefully when designing an exhibition system.**

This toolkit was created and/or compiled by The Rhode Island Department of Education and The Education Alliance at Brown University, with the generous support of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/highschoolreform/dslat/>  
October, 2005



**Rhode Island**

**HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA SYSTEM**

**RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT  
OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION**

**TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE BULLETIN**

February 2005

**Exhibition Toolkit | Design Components of the Exhibition System |  
Review RI Diploma System and Exhibition Requirements**

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## Rhode Island

# HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA SYSTEM

## TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE BULLETIN

### INTRODUCTION

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This Technical Assistance Bulletin is to be utilized by districts and schools to design and implement their components of the Rhode Island High School Diploma System (Diploma System) as required by the RI Board of Regents' *Regulations Regarding High School and Ensuring Literacy for Students Entering High School* (Regents' Regulations) issued in January of 2003. Its purpose is to help make important connections among the state's secondary-school reform strategies and key policy expectations to ensure consistency and comparability of graduation requirements across all high schools. Districts and schools should use this guide as a roadmap for developing their own plans and examining in detail how secondary-school reform will be accomplished in their schools. As they go through this process, they will ultimately improve the secondary-school experience for ALL students.

Districts and schools should refer to the initial guidance for the Regents' Regulations issued between November 2003 and April 2004 ([www.ridoe.net](http://www.ridoe.net)). The February 2004 Guidance document outlined initial thinking on Proficiency-Based Graduation Requirements (PBGRs). It offered enough detail to engage schools in a series of discussions that allowed a better understanding of ongoing efforts and an appreciation of the magnitude of work involved in the implementation of the RI High School Diploma System. Additional detail is contained in the *RI Diploma System Overview* (November 2004).

Districts and schools must recognize that the RI High School Diploma System (Diploma System) is intended to support a significant change in middle and high school education throughout the state. The change is from graduation requirements that primarily rely on seat time and course grades to those that include a standards-based system of demonstration of proficiency and application of learning for all students. This system has as its primary objective that all Rhode Island High School Graduates will be "college ready" regardless of their post-secondary plans. All components of a district's Diploma System must be in place for the class of 2008 (by Regents' Regulations). The Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (RIDE) and a number of partners (i.e., The National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment (NCIEA), The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Rhode Island Skills Commission, The Education Alliance at Brown University, and the Regional Collaboratives) are supporting the statewide implementation of the Diploma System.

## BACKGROUND

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Rhode Island has embarked on one of the most ambitious secondary-school reform initiatives seen anywhere in the nation. Capitalizing on opportunities to leverage change brought about by Regents' Regulations and the Federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLBA) (**ESEA 02 – January 2002**), Rhode Island has launched a comprehensive plan for addressing the critical issues facing the state's middle and high schools.

Rhode Island's process for graduating students from high school, as in many other states, depends almost exclusively on the accrual of Carnegie Units (seat time in courses). Past reform efforts resulted in increasing the number of units a student must have upon graduation. Generally, this has not led to an increase in student learning. In fact, students' test scores and feedback from higher education and the business community indicate that a high-school diploma does not consistently certify that a student is prepared to pursue further study, work, or other interests. Today's high-school graduates must have a strong literacy and numeracy foundation and be capable of problem-solving, decision-making, analytic reasoning, working with teams, effectively communicating and interpreting information, and demonstrating responsibility.

The Regents' Regulations require districts and schools to develop their response to the new Diploma System consistent with state and federal legislation, Regent's Regulations, state and national standards, and the Commissioner's All Kids Agenda (Educating ALL Our Children, 1992) while ensuring that students have multiple opportunities to demonstrate proficiency. Beginning with the class of 2008, all high school graduates must demonstrate proficiency in six core subject areas: English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, the arts and technology. They must also demonstrate proficiency of applied learning skills: communication, problem solving, critical thinking, research, personal/social responsibility, and interpersonal skills across all disciplines.

For the class of 2008, a district's or school's new Diploma System must incorporate the following components:

### **Course Work**

- Minimum 20 Carnegie Units
  - Determined by state laws and regulations
  - Developed from the school's learner outcomes
  - Based on common expectations for all students
  - Mapped to Grade Span Expectations (GSEs) and appropriate state and national standards and the school's learner outcomes identified through the NEASC process
  - Focused on academic content and applied learning skills across all disciplines and courses

### **Knowledge and Skills**

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- Content knowledge of core concepts in English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, the arts and technology
- Applied learning skills in communication, problem solving, critical thinking, research, personal/social responsibility, and interpersonal interactions across all

**Local Assessments**

- School-wide diploma assessments (Area of Specialized Interest)
  - Exhibitions, Graduation Portfolios, Certificates of Initial Mastery (CIM)
- Routine assessments
  - Daily quizzes, tests, common assessment tasks, projects and any other short-term measure of student achievement that might be conducted at the classroom, school, and district levels.

**State Assessments**

- New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP)
  - Reading, Writing, Mathematics (2006 or 2007)
  - Science (2008).

As Rhode Island transitions to this new Diploma System, learning experiences that lead to student proficiency in the common academic core (English language arts, mathematics, social studies, science, the arts, and technology) and applied learning skills can be delivered through the existing course structure. However, the curriculum, instruction, and assessments need to explicitly align with the districts' Diploma System components, the GSEs, and national content and Applied Learning standards.



## SECTION I – DESCRIPTION OF THE SYSTEM

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### OVERVIEW

Beginning with the high school graduating class of 2008, each student earning a diploma will need to meet the Diploma System components, as well as all other graduation requirements established by his or her school district. Demonstration of student proficiency must involve multiple measures of student performance, assess content and applied learning, and be consistent with the state's *Common Core of Learning for a New Century* (2002) (Common Core). Certifying student proficiency for graduation will remain the primary responsibility of district and schools.

Implementation of a standards-based Diploma System to meet the Regents' Regulations will require many changes in the manner in which districts and schools plan curriculum, instruct students, evaluate student performance and provide professional development to teachers and staff. Many of the changes can occur within the existing systems that districts and schools have established for providing learning experiences, evaluating student performance and making graduation decisions. *"Getting there from here: Implementing Local Assessment Systems for the Proficiency-based Graduation Requirements"* (available at [www.ridoe.net](http://www.ridoe.net)) provides an initial discussion of the process of implementation focusing on:

- aspects of current Diploma Systems likely to remain in place
- expected modifications or improvements that will be needed
- how new components and procedures will fit in the current system

### STUDENT REQUIREMENTS

As Rhode Island transitions from a system based chiefly on Carnegie Units to a system based on proficiency, course work remains an important component of the Diploma System. The student requirements for graduation include demonstration of proficiency in English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, the arts, and technology and concurrently demonstrating proficiency in the Applied Learning skills by successfully completing at least 20 Carnegie Units. A student's course work must meet the requirements of state law and regulations and include, at a minimum, four units in English language arts and three units in mathematics. In order to address the gap that takes place in a student's math learning, students are required to complete a fourth unit of math related work (not necessarily taught by a mathematics teacher). This math work needs to be linked to a student's Individualized Learning Plan. For example, a student may apply math learning from a CADS course, computer programming course, business or accounting course, physics, etc. The areas of proficiency in applied learning skills must include: communication, problem solving, critical thinking, research, personal/social responsibility, and interpersonal skills that are demonstrated across all disciplines.

Students must demonstrate significant learning and required elements and proficiencies in an area of "specialized interest", linked to their Individualized Learning Plans, through a Graduation Exhibition, Graduation Portfolio, or CIM. In addition to these graduation requirements, students'

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Individualized Learning Plans may specify learning goals such as preparation for post-secondary education, vocation, or other life pursuits that require specific coursework or training.

**PROFICIENCY DESCRIPTORS**

Under the current system, there is wide disparity among Rhode Island high schools in the preparation that students receive for further learning, the world of work, and service to their local community and state. Accordingly, the Regents' Regulations require that districts and schools establish graduation requirements that apply to all students. The Regents Regulations further require that the Commissioner ensure the comparability of graduation requirements among school districts.

**Proficiency for Graduation:**

Proficient performance for graduation is defined as the level of performance required of ALL students receiving a high school diploma. ALL students must demonstrate the following graduation criteria:

- Content knowledge and applied learning skills for ELA, Mathematics, and in 2010, Science at a requisite level defined by the RI Diploma System
- Content knowledge and applied learning skills for Social Studies, the Arts, and Technology at a requisite level defined by the school or district as guided by State descriptors
- College readiness, minimally to perform successfully at a community college without need for remediation
- Successful completion of at least two school-wide diploma assessments
- Successful completion of a minimum of 20 Carnegie Units, including those required by state laws and regulations

Within each content area, it is necessary to define and clearly describe the specific knowledge and applied learning skills needed to meet the general description of proficiency. The paragraphs below provide initial guidance toward developing full proficiency descriptors in each content area. RIDE will provide additional resources on developing proficiency descriptors and setting performance standards through professional development opportunities and the establishment of peer review criteria.

It is expected that students planning to pursue an advanced course of study in postsecondary education or preparing to meet the specialized requirements of a high-performance workplace will exceed the proficient level of performance required of ALL students in their selected areas of interest. Districts and schools must offer sufficient opportunities for individual students to pursue different learning paths related to the personal and career goals outlined in their Individualized Learning Plans. Accordingly, learning experiences that enhance and extend the learning of students and foster student interest must continue to be part of the high school experience.

### **English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science:**

To meet state and federal requirements and to ensure comparability among school districts, RIDE will establish the level of proficiency required for graduation in the content areas of English language arts, mathematics, and science. In these content areas, the level of performance required for graduation will reflect proficiency on the content standards contained in the state's Grade Span Expectations. Proficient students will be able to apply this content knowledge to demonstrate the balance of knowledge, skills, and attitudes required to meet the four major goals of the *Rhode Island's Common Core of Learning for a New Century*: communication, problem solving, body of knowledge, personal/social responsibility.

End of grade 10 GSEs have been developed and disseminated in English language arts and mathematics. GSEs in science are currently under development. (The *New Standards Performance Standards* have been a primary resource for the development of state GSEs.) In the interim, districts and schools must develop their own expectations for science using state and national standards. Each of these documents will provide the basis for determining the level of student proficiency required for graduation in ELA, mathematics and science.

Districts and schools will be responsible, through their local assessment systems, of collecting evidence to certify that each student has met the established definition of proficiency. More detailed performance descriptors based directly on the specific grade span expectations will be developed for each content area through a collaborative process involving RIDE and local school districts and will be reinforced through the peer review process.

### **Social Studies, Technology, the Arts:**

Districts will be responsible for establishing their own definition of proficiency for graduation in Social Studies, Technology, and the Arts. The central question that districts and schools must address in defining proficiency for graduation in social studies, the arts and technology is: What knowledge and skills do all students need in each content area to succeed after high school and contribute to their local community and state? This question guided the development of the GSEs in English language arts, mathematics and forthcoming science. Consistent with the other core content areas, each district's definition of proficiency must clearly describe the level of performance expected of ALL students. It must meet the general definition of proficiency for graduation and must be based on state or national standards.

It is not sufficient to simply catalogue what is currently being taught in Grades 9-12. As in the other core content areas, districts will be responsible, through their local assessment systems, of collecting evidence to certify that each student has met the established definition of proficiency. RIDE will offer additional assistance to districts and schools on developing definitions of proficiency for graduation through professional development efforts and the peer review process.

### **Ensuring Rigor Within Courses:**

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Although the Commissioner requires a minimum of 20 Carnegie Units, the focus of schools should be on the learning that occurs within the courses, not the number of courses. Establishing expectations for proficiency with content knowledge must be addressed with a corresponding focus on the expectations for applying that knowledge in practical and authentic ways. To develop proficient students, these two broad domains - the content of a discipline and the habits of thinking and applying within the discipline - must be concurrently addressed in all classes. The 20 Carnegie Units are a system requirement meant to ensure that all students have sufficient and appropriate opportunities to learn the content knowledge and applied learning skills they need for success in life, work, and college.

The focus on what occurs within the required units is designed to increase the opportunities for students to learn rigorous subject matter and eliminate or reduce the less rigorous curricula experiences that some students encounter. Accordingly, the content, concepts, and habits of thinking, reasoning, communicating, and applying knowledge outlined in the GSEs and the RI Diploma System must be mapped back to individual classes to ensure that curricula, instruction, and assessment appropriately scaffold student learning.

**SCHOOL AND DISTRICT DIPLOMA SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS**

For students to meet the requirements of the new High School Diploma System, schools and districts must ensure that the structures and supports that will make this possible are in place. Schools and districts are required to:

1. Establish local criteria, policies, and procedures to implement the graduation-by-proficiency components of their high school Diploma System.
2. Provide sufficient opportunities for students to learn and demonstrate that they have met the student requirements of the new Diploma System and the goals of their Individualized Learning Plans.
3. Provide acceptable documentation of their system through a Peer Review process and the Commissioner's Review.
4. Implement an effective communications plan to inform parents, students, and others about the school's High School Diploma System and results.

## **1. Local Criteria, Policies, and Procedures:**

Some of the areas that schools and districts must consider as they establish their local criteria, policies, and procedures for the graduation-by-proficiency components of their High School Diploma System include:

- The types of and how much evidence is required for a student to demonstrate that s/he has met the state-established performance descriptors in English language arts, mathematics, and science (forthcoming).
- The local performance descriptors based on the national and state content and applied learning standards required for a student to demonstrate proficiency in social studies, arts, and technology.
- The type of and how much evidence is required for a student to demonstrate that s/he has met the local performance descriptors in social studies, arts, and technology.
- The type and criteria for a district/school's diploma assessments (Area of Specialized Interest).
- The type of and how much evidence is required for a student to demonstrate that s/he has met the requirements for demonstration of an area of specialized interest through a Graduation Exhibition, Graduation Portfolio, and CIM.<sup>1</sup>

In establishing these criteria, policies, and procedures, schools and districts will consider a number of issues such as how to include a student's performance on the state on-demand high school assessment to count up to 10% of the weight in determining proficiency.

## **2. Multiple Opportunities to Learn:**

Districts and schools must ensure that all curricula, instruction, assessment, and school structures provide appropriate opportunities to learn for students to achieve and to exceed the required content, concepts and applied learning skills. In addition, students must have access to learning experiences that will allow them to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to pursue independent investigations in a specialized area of interest.

To provide multiple opportunities to learn, districts and schools must invest in strengthening established programs and instituting new ones. Advisory structures, mentors, comprehensive school counseling, and contextual classroom learning experiences help students identify and pursue topics for further study. In addition, districts and schools are responsible for offering mechanisms to honor a student's existing knowledge when developing a student's Individualized Learning Plan and supporting a student's progress in his/her area of specialized interest.

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<sup>1</sup> Requirements and helpful supporting materials regarding Graduation Exhibitions and Graduation Portfolios are available in the "Toolkits" and other materials available from RIDE.

**Offering a Range of Experiences** - High schools must continue to offer a range of experiences that enable individual students to pursue different learning paths related to the academic, career, and personal/social goals outlined in their Individualized Learning Plans. The RI Diploma System requirements are not intended to cause a narrowing of the curricula in RI's high schools or to imply that all students need to study only those items represented in these graduation requirements. Learning experiences that enhance and extend the learning of students and foster student interest - **especially in the arts and career and technical education** - must continue to be part of the high school experience. This coursework often provides the foundation for students to pursue areas of specialized interest.

**Honoring Existing Learning and Knowledge Acquired Outside of School** - Districts are strongly encouraged to provide opportunities for students to demonstrate proficiency through proficiency assessments or other processes that assess a student's existing knowledge. Schools should use evidence from these assessments towards a student's graduation requirements. The intent of recognizing existing knowledge is to enable students to take additional and more advanced courses, to pursue courses outside of high school, or participate in other activities that focus on those areas where a student has not yet demonstrated proficiency.

**Area of Specialized Interest** - The school-wide diploma assessments (Graduation Exhibitions, Graduation Portfolios and the CIM) driving the RI Diploma System must promote rigor and have personal relevance for individual students. By drawing on a student's strengths, interests, and knowledge, these assessments can allow a student to demonstrate proficiency, in authentic ways, with content that is aligned with his/her area of specialized interest; and his or her individual academic and career goals. Exhibitions, Graduation Portfolios and the CIM must require substantial independent work in and, when appropriate, outside of school and incorporate applied learning skills.

The school-wide diploma assessments should explicitly require demonstration of the applied learning skills and the GSEs that are common expectations for ALL students. The focus on skills should not happen without a concurrent focus on content knowledge, which can be within or outside of the core curriculum. This type of learning should not be limited to Diploma Assessments. Classroom instruction and assessments should also be designed to foster the development of deep content knowledge and applied learning within the context of in-depth and long-term work, which individual students pursue.

**District and School Structures** - For all students to learn, a systemic way for all students to access curriculum and instruction must be in place. These opportunities to learn occur in districts and schools that have deliberately set up structures to maximize effective teaching and learning time. A nurturing school climate and quality leadership are inherent structures in schools that allow teachers to effectively create rich learning experiences for ALL students.

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It is important for students to have sufficient opportunities to learn the overarching knowledge and skills needed to move from dependent to independent learners. A school / district system requirement is to ensure the curriculum, instruction, assessment, and school structures provide appropriate opportunities for students to acquire and extend their understanding of course content, concepts, and applied learning skills while they engage in extended tasks, or specialized areas of interest. This includes advisory structures, mentors, and classroom learning experiences that help students identify and pursue topics for further study.

These internal district/school structures should or are encouraged to include:

- School improvement teams, unions, school leadership, school boards and professional development committees that keep the focus on learning and achievement
- Administrative practices and policies that ensure equity and adequacy of fiscal and human resource
- Educational leadership that guides the selection, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices, designed to address equity and performance gaps
- Incentive programs that allow the recruitment, support and retention of highly qualified teachers that balance employee contracts with fiscal responsibility
- Communication systems that allow the exchange and use of information for planning and accountability
- Community and family engagement structures that allow continual access and dialogue with the district/school regarding student achievement, policies, and how they can be active participants in creating schools that foster high achievement
- Physical structures, programs and school climate that ensure safe and supportive learning environments for students (e.g. advisories, small learning communities, Individualized Learning Plans, dual enrollment, career academies, interdisciplinary and multi-age teams, internships, flexible scheduling)

Strategies that teachers and school leadership use should or are encouraged to include:

- Instruction that includes Universal Design, differentiation, Applied Learning, and authentic assessments (refer to Appendix for Universal Design)
- Instruction that articulates Grade Level/Span Expectations and the appropriate demonstrations that show evidence of meeting those expectations

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- On-going embedded assessments, and timely appropriate intervention programs (see Problem Solving Model below) for struggling students
- Comprehensive counseling
- Tutoring, extended school day, and ramp-up programs
- Access to community programs and projects
- Multiple opportunities for students to revise their work

The Response to Intervention Model (also called the Problem Solving Model) is being applied in many Rhode Island schools as a method for effective intervention planning for students who are not meeting proficiency expectations and as a means to address the elementary and secondary literacy requirements under state and federal regulations. With this model, schools are able to assess student performance, design interventions, monitor progress, adjust intervention and report performance improvements. For further information on the Response to Intervention Model go to [www.ritap.org](http://www.ritap.org) or contact RI Technical Assistance Project (RITAP) at (401) 456-4600 (see Appendix for Summary of this model).

### **3. Documentation Through Peer Review Process:**

Each district/school will need to provide documentation of its local criteria, policies, opportunities, and structures related to its Diploma System components for review. There will be two stages of review; Peer Review and Commissioner Review. RIDE will establish the criteria for the Peer Review, establish the Peer Review Process, provide professional development to train reviewers, and provide other supports to districts/schools going through Peer Review. A Peer Review team will consist of district and school personnel from districts and schools other than the one being reviewed, RIDE staff, and additional persons with appropriate expertise. Each Peer Review team will evaluate evidence provided by a district or school about its High School Diploma System in relation to established dimensions. The Peer Review team will make a recommendation to the RIDE regarding the district's/school's Diploma System.

The Commissioner of Education will make a final determination of the acceptability of each district's/school's Diploma System, informed by the Peer Review recommendations. It is intended that the Commissioner's Review will result in a district's/school's Diploma System being declared "Acceptable," "Conditionally Acceptable," or "Not Acceptable."<sup>2</sup> A district/school that receives a rating of "Conditionally Acceptable" or "Not Acceptable" will also be informed of specific actions that should be taken in order to become "Acceptable" and a timeline for follow-up with RIDE. (See the Time Schedule in the Appendix of this Technical Assistance Bulletin regarding the implementation for various aspects of the Peer Review and Commissioner's Review).

The Peer Review will include eight dimensions:

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<sup>2</sup> These specific terms are tentative. The intent is that there will be at least three levels initially.



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1. Districts/schools must provide students adequate **access to the curriculum and instruction** prior to holding students accountable for demonstrating graduation proficiency.
2. The assessment system must be **aligned** to the established state (and local) content and performance standards.
3. The assessment evidence must be **sufficient** to support the assessment interpretations and uses.
4. The decisions resulting from the assessment system must be **consistent** over persons, occasions, and time.
5. Both the assessments and the opportunity to learn the content standards must be **fair for all students**, including those from diverse backgrounds and special populations.
6. The process by which the district establishes **performance standards** for students must be fair.
7. The district's/school's Diploma System should be **coherent** within itself and as a part of a larger educational endeavor.
8. The district's/school's Diploma System should be **sustainable** (practical, adaptive, supported by parents and students, etc.).

**4. Establish a Comprehensive Communication Plan Regarding the Diploma System:**

Each district and school must establish a means for communicating with parents, students, and others about the district's/school's High School Diploma System. Districts and schools must explain the requirements, policies, and procedures clearly to students and parents so students understand and can succeed in meeting the proficiency requirements. Districts and schools should involve parents and other community members in certain aspects of establishing the district/school Diploma System (e.g., setting performance standards). Parents and students must also be regularly informed regarding the student's standing and progress towards graduation throughout the student's enrollment in the school. Districts and schools may institute local requirements regarding parental involvement, such as requiring that parents acknowledge awareness of their child's Graduation Exhibition or Graduation Portfolio plan.

**Further Information:**

RIDE will provide additional support through materials, professional development, and other technical assistance to enable schools and districts to establish strong Diploma Systems and prepare for the Peer Review and Commissioner Review.

SECTION III – OTHER ELEMENTS OF THE DIPLOMA SYSTEM

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PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:

The success of the RI Diploma System is dependent upon the knowledge and skills of teachers and administrators. The Regents' Regulations call for fifteen hours of professional development annually for all certified staff members in the three priority areas of literacy, graduation by proficiency and/or personalization. While the RI Diploma System is most closely linked to graduation by proficiency, attending to the literacy needs of students and creating personalized learning environments are critical for helping students achieve and exceed proficiency.

Districts and schools must determine their professional development needs in terms of the RI Diploma System and correspondingly offer programming for certified staff to address these areas. Since all students, through their courses and other learning experiences, must demonstrate proficiency in the six core areas, certified staff must understand the standards for proficiency as determined by the state (GSEs for Reading, Writing, Oral Communication, Mathematics and forthcoming Science) and by the district (Social Studies, Arts and Technology). Additionally, Applied Learning is fundamental to these demonstrations of proficiency. Consequently, all teachers must incorporate experiences for students that offer practice and help build ability in the application of content knowledge. Likewise, all certified staff must be well versed in the required components of their diploma system and their impact on curriculum and instruction.

For additional details regarding offering and documenting professional development required by the Regents' Regulations, see pages 29-32 of *Initial Guidance for the High School Restructuring Component*, Version 3.8, issued by RIDE on April 13, 2004.

UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING (UDL):

As a new paradigm for teaching, learning, assessment and curriculum development, Universal Design for Learning (UDL) draws upon and extends principles of universal design as used in architecture and product design. Architects practicing universal design create structures, which accommodate the widest spectrum of users possible. In universally designed environments, adaptability is subtle and integrated into the design. Designing for the divergent needs of special populations increases usability for everyone.

UDL shifts old assumptions about teaching and learning in these fundamental ways:

- All students including students with disabilities or other special instructional needs fall along a continuum of learner differences.
- Teacher adjustments or learner differences should occur for all students, not just those with disabilities or other special instructional needs.
- Curriculum materials should be varied and diverse including digital and online resources, rather than centering on a single textbook.

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The central practical premise of UDL is that a curriculum should include alternatives to make it accessible and appropriate for individuals with different backgrounds, learning styles, abilities, and disabilities in widely varied learning contexts. The “universal” in universal design does not imply one optimal solution for everyone. Rather, it reflects an awareness of the unique nature of each learner and the need to accommodate differences, creating learning experiences that suit the learner and maximize his or her ability to progress (see Appendix for details on UDL).

### Universal Design for Access:

No two students learn the same way. Even within the normal range of performance and ability, students vary greatly in their ability to see, hear, move, read, write, attend, organize, focus, engage and remember. Applying universal design to learning materials and activities can increase access for all learners, including those with disabilities.

Access to materials is necessary but not sufficient to achieve universal design for learning. Non-educators often make the mistake of equating “access to information” with “access to learning.” Depending upon the goal of a lesson or activity, increasing access can actually destroy the learning opportunity. For example, if the goal is to teach word decoding to a student with dyslexia, having the computer read all of the words aloud would be counter-productive. On the other hand, if the goal is to convey science concepts, having the computer read the text aloud could enhance the learning opportunity for a student with dyslexia.

### APPLIED LEARNING:

The ultimate purpose of education is for students to develop the ability to use what they learn in school to meet the challenges of life. This includes learning to solve problems in everyday life as they occur in the world, inventing and discovering things, convincing people to act in certain ways, and many other activities. All of these activities require that student exercise independent, informed judgment and should result in significantly impacting the student, the student’s peers, or the student’s community.

The importance of assuring that students can use what they learn has led to the formulation of that part of the Regents’ Regulations requiring that students demonstrate proficiency in Applied Learning. However, in order to evaluate a demonstration of proficiency, Applied Learning requires a definition precise enough for districts to establish standards, instruction, and assessments that can guide the development of their students’ proficiency in this area.

Applied Learning can be thought of as having the following dimensions:

1. The **learner outcomes** (knowledge, skills, and cognitive activities) that students need to apply their learning
2. Student and teacher **roles** and **responsibilities**
3. The **contexts** or the **areas of learning** in which Applied Learning takes place.

## **1. Learner Outcomes and Activities of Applied Learning:**

Applied Learning refers to many different cognitive activities that students utilize in order to apply the content they learn in class. These activities, or functions, are broken down in many ways, the most important functions include:

- Problem solving: the student formulates core questions and concerns about topics or areas of interest and organizes and conducts a process to create an intellectual or physical product, hold an event, conduct a process or otherwise move towards the solution of the identified issue or problem.
- Critical thinking: the student analyzes a piece of work and detects incompleteness, inconsistency and opportunities for expansion of ideas, products, procedures, etc.
- Research, in which the student uses information tools and technology to learn and deepen his or her understanding about a topic or area of interest.
- Communication (oral or written): the student questions, informs, and learns from others.
- Reflection and evaluation: the student reviews and thinks critically about their past activities and plans for the future.

Each of these activities can occur on at different levels of complexity and sophistication. Teachers can develop students' proficiency in each and assessments (rubrics, criteria lists, etc.) can be written for each. However, the true proficiencies of Applied Learning are built by learning to connect and integrate these cognitive functions.

## **2. Student Roles and Responsibilities in Applied Learning:**

In order to apply their learning, students need to be able to learn from teachers and other authorities, act as members of learning-communities or research teams, and interact in a variety of ways to learn from peers and experts. They also need to be able to act in self-directed ways, making decisions about where to invest time and energy based on crucial decisions about the significance and importance of what they learn and do.

In order for students to reach the level of independent learner and collaborator as described above, both students and teachers will have to change their roles and responsibilities at various times and within various contexts. Students will move back and forth between being dependent, interdependent, and independent learners. In order to facilitate students' progression and growth as learners applying their knowledge, teachers' responsibilities will also change, from teacher to coach and facilitator then to interdependent learner. Briefly, the different roles students play in order to apply their learning are:

- Dependent Learner: learning from an expert about knowledge or how to apply that knowledge

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- Interdependent Learner: the student learns interactively with peers, members of teams, groups, or communities
- Independent Learner: the student makes his or her own judgments, decisions, revisions etc.

All of these roles require different contexts, settings, and conditions for students in which to work and learn.

### **3. The Contexts of Applied Learning:**

Learning can be applied in many contexts and in many areas of learning. Consequently there is no specific content for Applied Learning. Instead, as described above, Applied Learning consists of the application of a set of disciplines and roles to a very wide variety of contents. As students are educated, these disciplines should be exercised concurrently in all academic areas and in all other learning situations. Some of the ways students demonstrate Applied Learning include the way they solve problems, critique art and literature, conduct research, collect and analyze information, synthesize discreet pieces of information, communicate with others, evaluate their own work, and prioritize and organize their use of time. Students should develop proficiency in these fundamental skills across the arts, sciences, social sciences, humanities, and information technology, as well as a variety of community and career-related contexts.

### **Regents' Requirements for Applied Learning Proficiency:**

Beginning with the class of 2008, the Regents require that students demonstrate the following two levels of proficiency:

**Initial Applied Learning proficiency across all six (6) required content areas** - Students are able to 1) solve a problem that requires the application of skills and knowledge in a learning experience, 2) use research and consultation skills to strengthen their understanding of an solution to a problem, 3) communicate the results and process used to solve the problem, and 4) reflect upon their use of the problem solving and communication process. The Regents will give definitions and exemplars of the kinds and difficulty levels of problems students need to solve to demonstrate proficiency. It is expected that students will have many opportunities to demonstrate this level of proficiency in Applied Learning throughout all disciplines and courses throughout the four years of high school.

**Advanced demonstration of Applied Learning in an Area of Specialized Interest of the student's choice** - In addition to the Applied Learning proficiencies demonstrated across all courses and disciplines, students are able to use their own interests to: define the goals of their problem solving activities; organize a process that results in a solution to that process; and conduct communications with a variety of audiences about how to solve the problem and about how the problem was solved. The Regents will give definitions and exemplars of the kinds and difficulty level of the problems students need to solve to demonstrate advanced mastery. It is expected that students will demonstrate this level of Applied Learning in an Exhibition, CIM, or Graduation Portfolio.

### **END OF COURSE EXAMINATIONS:**

Students need valid and reliable end-of-course assessments to demonstrate that they have learned course content and are able to apply that content in meaningful ways. Because the application of knowledge requires students to engage in extended, complex thinking, end-of-course examinations need to include performance tasks that demand this kind of thinking. End-of-course examinations must include at least 50% of performance tasks or task-like assessments and may include other objective questions (example true or false, fill in the blanks, and multiple choice).

For end-of-course examinations to be as valid and reliable as possible, schools should have and use standard operating procedures for assessing students and criteria for the assessments they use. These criteria should include assessments that are:

- clearly connected to standards and expectations of the course discipline
- written clearly and without language or content that would disadvantage students for cultural/ethnic reasons (without bias)
- at an appropriate level of difficulty

- composed of collectively developed tasks
- scored by teachers who are trained in calibration and scoring using valid criteria and rubrics

### **SECTION III – TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE:**

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A series of meetings and technical assistance sessions are designed to assist districts in implementing the Regents' Regulations as they relate to the new Diploma System and their proficiency components.

#### **RIDE Technical Assistance:**

In February 2005, RIDE will sponsor regional meetings to deepen the districts' and schools' understanding of the new Diploma System. These meetings provide an overall description of the Diploma System requirements and provide a mini clinic on GSE alignment with courses. In Spring 2005, RIDE and its partners will offer Clinics and Workshops to address those issues that present the greatest challenges to schools in implementing the Diploma System. Additionally, school site visits will be scheduled later in Spring 2005 to provide an opportunity for schools to share their current Diploma System components with RIDE staff. The purpose of these visits is to mutually inform schools and RIDE of progress being made toward successful implementation of the Diploma System as well as to identify need for further technical assistance.

#### **Bill and Melinda Gates' Foundation Network Technical Assistance:**

Three networks (Exhibition, Graduation Portfolio, and Common Tasks) are currently being supported by a Bill and Melinda Gates' Foundation grant. The primary focus of the work is to develop toolkits that include necessary resources, guidelines, strategies, and instruments and for RI schools as they implement their components of the RI Diploma System. The toolkits are intended to provide technical assistance for schools as they implement high quality, valid, and reliable proficiency-based diploma assessments. The toolkits created by these networks will be made available as part of a widely distributed, searchable, web-based suite of materials and contain these common elements:

- Definitions and descriptions of the respective assessments (Exhibition, Graduation Portfolio, and Common Tasks)
- The role and function of each of the above assessments in the RI Diploma System
- Descriptions of the required elements in each assessment
- Guidelines and Strategies for implementation of the different assessments
- Rubrics and other reproducible documents and forms
- Lists of print and electronic resources
- Guidelines and strategies for evaluating these assessments to ensure consistency, rigor, and fairness in the diploma assessments throughout the state
- Frequently asked questions

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- Glossary of terms

Each toolkit outlines the minimum state requirements necessary for a valid diploma assessment. It is expected that districts and schools will develop additional elements specific to the expectations they have for their high school graduates. The finalized version of the toolkits will be available in late Spring 2005. However, draft versions have been distributed since August 2004 and provide initial guidance and tools for schools starting to develop their diploma assessments.

Concurrently, the Gates' grant is being used to fund statewide professional development conferences and to support a network of pilot schools. The pilot schools are using and evaluating some of the Gates' toolkit materials, sharing their strategies and tools for development and implementation, as well as, serving as visitation sites for other RI schools looking for working models of assessment programs. For information regarding the Gates' networks or other Gates' projects providing technical assistance for the RI High School Diploma System contact Michael Barnes, Gates Project Fellow ([rid23941@ride.ri.net](mailto:rid23941@ride.ri.net), (401)-222-4600 x2275).



## APPENDICES

## Appendix A: Content Descriptions

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### **English Language Arts Content**

Language is probably the most distinctive and universal of all human attributes and competence in its use is vital to a meaningful life. The language arts are the cornerstone of an individual's education and include a full array of language practices related to understanding and communication in all content areas and in all domains of life. In addition to reading, writing, and conversing, they include the ability to interpret the diverse array of visual and auditory texts of a highly technical society.

*Rhode Island's Common Core of Learning for a New Century, Literacy for ALL Students: The Rhode Island English Language Arts Frameworks*, and the Grade Span Expectations (GSEs) intersect to articulate the explicit knowledge and skills that high school students must be able to demonstrate if they are to receive a high school diploma in Rhode Island.

### **Reading Content:**

In all reading, high school graduates are expected to:

- read grade-level appropriate material, including both literary and informational texts. Accurate and fluent reading is required so the reader may construct meaning from the text. A proficient reader demonstrates the ability to monitor comprehension and to use a variety of strategies before, during and after reading both literary and informational text.
- demonstrate a breadth of vocabulary knowledge including using a variety of strategies to unlock the meaning of unfamiliar words, explain word meanings and relationships; and, select appropriate words or explain the use of words in context
- analyze and interpret literary elements within and across texts and, when appropriate, to cite evidence in order to support one's position.
- analyze and interpret author's craft within and across texts and, when appropriate, to cite evidence in order to support one's position.
- generate a personal response to text(s).
- demonstrate an initial understanding of literacy work: those skills include identifying, describing and making logical predictions about characters and the elements of plot; paraphrasing and or summarizing; identifying the characteristics of genres of literary text; and identifying literary devices, as appropriate to genre.

In a traditional sense, the content of English language arts focuses on literary text. However, informational text has a place within this content. Essays, literary criticisms, editorials, and speeches represent types of informational text frequently used in the English language arts classroom.

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Furthermore, high school graduates are expected to:

- analyze and interpret informational text and, when appropriate, cite evidence to support one's position. Such analysis and interpretation may occur within or across texts.
- demonstrate an initial understanding of informational texts: those skills include generating questions to enhance understanding and recall, and identifying the characteristics of a variety of types of informational text.

In order to demonstrate competence in all the English language arts expectations, the student will also demonstrate his (her) habit of reading widely and extensively. Whatever project (i.e. exhibition, CIM, or graduation portfolio) is chosen as the medium for demonstrating proficiency, applied literacy skills will include:

- reading with frequency, both in and out of school.
- reading a wide range of genres (literary) and kinds (informational) of texts.
- reading multiple texts for depth of understanding.
- researching to solve a problem, to make a decision, to formulate a judgment, or to support a thesis.

The description of the English language arts content articulates a framework of expectations and competencies. For a detailed description of each expectation, please consult the NECAP draft Grade Span Expectations (GSEs) at [www.ridoe.net](http://www.ridoe.net).

### **Writing Content:**

One of the hallmarks of an educated person is the ability to read, write, speak, listen and converse effectively. People with well-developed communication skills understand others and express themselves well. In addition, they give and receive constructive feedback, adapting their words and actions as reason and circumstances dictate.

*Rhode Island's Common Core of Learning for the New Century and Literacy for ALL Students: The Rhode Island English Language Arts Frameworks* serve as the foundation for the Grade Span Expectations (GSEs). These sources articulate the explicit knowledge and skills that high school students must be able to demonstrate if they are to receive a high school diploma in Rhode Island.

In all writing, high school graduates are expected to:

- engage in a writing process and apply writing conventions (grammar, usage and mechanics) accordingly.

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- apply understanding of sentences, paragraphs, and text structures to all genres of writing.
- apply a format and text structure to writing that is appropriate to purpose, audience, and context.
- demonstrate, in all writing genres, through their own experiences, that writing is a recursive rather than a linear process, and that not all pieces of writing will be published.
- document that the writing instruction they received provided ample opportunities for prewriting, drafting multiple versions, revision, teacher and peer conferencing, self-assessment, and sharing of writing.
- demonstrates a range and breadth of experience in expressive and informational writing across the content areas.

Additionally, responding to literary and informational text is critical for a high school graduate's future success. These experiences are documented by providing evidence in portfolio collections, student exhibitions and common tasks.

High school graduates must be skilled in a variety of types of writing. These include:

**Expressive Writing:**

**Narrative** – Writing that tells a story or recounts an event. Students organize and relate a story line/plot/series of events and demonstrate use of narrative strategies that create images, use dialogue, develop characters, use voice appropriate to purpose, maintain focus and control the pace of the story.

**Reflective Essay** – A form of writing in which an author explores and shares the meaning of a personal experience, belief, or idea. Students explore and share thoughts, observations and impressions by engaging the reader in analyzing a condition or situation of significance or developing a commonplace, concrete occasion as the basis for the reflection. The writer provides closure in reflective writing – leaving the reader with something to think about.

**Poetry** – A form of written expression. Students understand that form, purpose and audience vary in writing poetry. Vocabulary selection is appropriate to the purpose and effect on the audience. Poetry expresses the speaker's mood, thoughts or feelings by selecting and manipulating words, phrases or clauses, for connotation/shades of meaning and impact.

**Informational Writing:**

**Persuasive** – Persuasive writing is writing that aims at convincing people to accept a point of view, to change their minds about something or to act in a certain way. A persuasive

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essay is a form of writing in which a writer supports an opinion and tries to persuade an audience.

**Procedure** – Writing a procedure is writing to explain a process or to inform an audience of how to do something. A procedure piece presents the steps of the process in clear, logical, easy-to-follow manner; includes all necessary steps; and defines any terms the audience may not know.

**Report** – Writing that results from gathering, investigating, and organizing facts and thoughts on a focused topic.

**Response to Literary or Informational Text** – Writing in which the author analyzes plot/ideas/concepts, making inferences about content, characters, philosophy, theme, author's craft, or other elements within a piece of literature or informational text. Students respond to literary or informational text by making and supporting analytical judgments by establishing an interpretive claim in the form of a thesis. Students demonstrate the ability to connect what has been read (plot/ideas/concepts) to prior knowledge, other texts, or the broader world of ideas, by referring to and explaining relevant ideas or themes. Students use specific details and references to text or relevant citations to support thesis, conclusions, or interpretations when making inferences about relationship(s) among content, events, characters, setting, theme or author's craft.

## **Mathematics Content**

The National Research Council in “Adding It Up” describes mathematical proficiency comprehensively as the intertwining of five essential components: conceptual understanding, procedural fluency, strategic competence, adaptive reasoning, and productive disposition. The relevancy and necessity to be proficient in mathematics can only be appreciated and demonstrated through the interaction of understanding mathematics concepts, operations, and relations; through the ability and skill to accurately and efficiently perform procedures; through the capacity of logical reasoning, explanations, and reflective thought; and through the ability to formulate, represent, and solve problems.

The state and local GSEs developed by the New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) identifies student expectations for grades 9-10. These expectations cut across four mathematical strands that include Number and Operation, Algebra and Function, Geometry and Measurement, and Data Statistics and Probability in all of which students need to demonstrate proficiency.

Using the GSEs and the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics Principles and Standards for School Mathematics (PSSM) as the guide to identify what mathematics students need to know and be able to do, the following are broad student expectations.

Instructional programs should enable students to:

- understand numbers, ways of representing numbers, relationships among numbers, and number systems
- work with all types of real numbers
- understand meanings of operations and how they relate to one another
- compute fluently and make reasonable estimates
- understand patterns, relations, and functions
- represent and analyze mathematical situations and structures using algebraic symbols
- use mathematical models to represent and understand quantitative relationships
- analyze change in various contexts
- analyze characteristics and properties of two- and three-dimensional geometric shapes and develop mathematical arguments about geometric relationships
- specify locations and describe spatial relationships using coordinate geometry and other representational systems
- apply transformations and use symmetry to analyze mathematical situations

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- use visualization, special reasoning, and geometric modeling to solve problems
- understand measurable attributes of objects and the units, systems, and processes of measurement
- apply appropriate techniques, tools, and formulas to determine measurements
- formulate questions that can be addressed with data and collect, organize, and display relevant data to answer them
- select and use appropriate statistical methods to analyze data
- develop and evaluate inferences and predictions that are based on data
- understand and apply basic concepts of probability

Proficient high school students can demonstrate an understanding of algebraic, statistical, and geometric and spatial reasoning. Specifically, the students can perform algebraic operations involving polynomials, prove and justify geometric relationships, and determine and defend the reasonableness of solutions of real-life situations. Seniors are able to use concrete examples to solve specific problems and extend their understandings to formulate generalizations. These students can analyze and interpret data presented in tables and graphs; use statistical models to prove and defend a position; understand concepts of and use properties of various functions (linear, quadratic, and exponential) represented symbolically, graphically, and tabularly; make and defend conjectures and give concrete examples. The students can communicate their mathematical reasoning through correct, clear and concise explanations.

## **Science Content**

Science involves particular ways of observing, thinking, questioning, experimenting, communicating and validating. Science proficiency is demonstrated by the application of content knowledge and skills to solving problems related to the natural world. Science literacy can be defined as having understandings of the nature of science and the fundamental concepts of life science, physical science, earth, and space science. Included in the content area: scientific process, properties of matter, structure and forces of the universe, characteristics of living things, interactions of living things and the environment, human biology, principles and applications of engineering and technology, societal implications of science, and, key episodes in the history of science.

As stated in *Benchmarks for Science Literacy* (1993), the source document for *Science Literacy for All: The Rhode Island Science Framework* (1995), students of science must have multiple opportunities to relate the content they study to the unifying themes of science. The various national documents have significant overlap in identifying these common elements. Rhode Island's GSEs in science and its State Science Assessment will be organized around a compilation of the unifying concepts and processes that transcend the separate domains of science.

## **UNIFYING THEMES**

<b><i>Benchmarks for Science Literacy (1993)</i></b>	<b><i>The National Science Education Standards (1996)</i></b>
Systems	Systems, Order and Organization
Scale	Form and Function
Constancy and Change	Constancy, Change and Measurement
Models	Evidence, Models and Explanations
	Evolution and Equilibrium

As students study science content, they must simultaneously develop the habits of mind (values, skills and attitudes) associated with science, and engage in and become skilled at scientific inquiry. To be proficient in scientific inquiry, high school graduates should be able to:

- identify questions and concepts that guide scientific investigations
- design and conduct experiments
- make predictions based on information and observations
- integrate technology and mathematics into science activities



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- formulate and revise scientific explanations and models using scientific evidence
- recognize and analyzing alternative explanations and models
- communicate and defend scientific arguments
- apply scientific concepts to real-world issues

All science courses in high school must have a regular laboratory component that embeds science safety procedures. By making science experiential, students will have the opportunity to master the process of science, as well as its content. Every graduating student must have engaged in at least one long-term (several weeks' duration) science investigation. Students must have regular practice in writing technical reports and research papers, making presentations about science and examining the role of science and society. The multiple assessments required for proficiency-based graduation must include components that capture a student's skill with science investigation and communication.

## **Social Studies Content**

The Rhode Island guide established in 2001 for developing social studies curriculum, the National Center for History in the schools (*National Standards for History, 1996*) and the National Council for the Social Studies (*Expectations for Excellence, Curriculum Standards for Social Studies, 1994*) recommend that all students acquire a knowledge based that includes:

- Civics and Government
- United States and World History
- Economics
- Geography

Along with the content knowledge inherent in these disciplines are the *Standards in Historical Thinking* contained within the National Standards for History in the Schools that require students to develop skills needed to engage in:

- Chronological Thinking
- Historical Comprehension
- Historical Analysis and Interpretation
- Historical Research
- Historical Issues – Analysis and Decision-Making

As in all other disciplines, academic rigor in Social Studies will be characterized by course work that combines the content knowledge in the various disciplines with the habits of thinking and applying within the discipline. The historical knowledge of United States and World History should include knowledge of the critical eras in the American and World History as outlined in the *National Standards for History* established by the National Center for History in the Schools. In identifying the critical eras in the United States and World History, this document contains content standards for specific knowledge for each of these eras. School districts will need to select from the large number of content standards to design a Social Studies curriculum that will enable their students to meet the district's Proficiency-Based Graduation Requirements and learner outcomes.

To demonstrate proficiency in United States and World History students must demonstrate their ability to apply the *Standards in Historical Thinking* to the content of these disciplines. For example, in United States History, Era 3, Standard 1 requires that students know the causes of the American Revolution, the ideas and interests involved in forging the revolutionary movement, and the reasons for American victory.

To be considered proficient in social studies, students must also demonstrate knowledge of civics, government, economics, and geography in accordance with the National Standards in each of these disciplines.

For civics and government, content knowledge should include the:

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- purposes, structure, and variety of governments, with specific emphasis on the constitutional democracy.
- principles and ideas underlying the American political systems.
- rights and responsibilities of United States citizens.
- civic skills necessary for participatory citizenship.

In economics, content should include:

- knowledge of economic indicators and the way in which they are used by a society for decision-making.
- how markets function and the roles that prices play in a market-based economy.
- the role of government in the United State's economy.
- the costs and benefits of trade among individuals and organizations within a nation and between different nations.
- how income output, and employment are determined in a market economy.
- the impact of policy decisions on achieving the goals of economy stability.

The content knowledge of geography should include the:

- ordered patterns that blanket the earth's surface.
- nature of places and the characteristics of regions.
- physical processes that shape the earth's surface and ecosystem.
- social, cultural, and economic components, of human activity, which help shape the earth's surface, human settlements, and structures.
- ways humans modify, use, adapt to, and interact with their environment.
- role of geography in human history and in the development of diverse patterns of human settlement and activities.

## **The Arts Content**

Defining and assessing proficiency is complex. Four statewide teams developed information to help guide districts as they develop proficiency plans in the Arts. The information is available on the RI Arts Learning Network Website at <http://www.riartslearning.net>. Information is intended to be realistic, based on states that already have proficiency requirements in the Arts and on state and national standards. The arts proficiencies described are achievable by “All Kids.”

The graduation expectations in the Arts require that a student demonstrate proficiency in one art form (music, visual arts, theater, or dance). Demonstrating proficiency is understood to be a developmental process, K-12, and therefore not achieved with one course in high school. Substantial learning at home or in the community may make significant contributions to the learner’s development. Arts education, as with other core areas, should be sequential and standards-based, beginning in elementary school and continuing through middle and high school.

Arts educators, as will other core areas, need to be included as full members on district proficiency-planning teams and must be responsible for assessing proficiency in their own subject areas. If the demonstration is interdisciplinary, this will include being an integral part of the interdisciplinary assessment team.

As with the guidance provided on the RI Arts Learning Network Website, arts proficiency is understood to encompass at least two of the following, depending on the art form: Creating, performing, responding, and technical components. Students may or may not be equally skilled in each area. Schools may allow students to use a variety of strategies to exhibit proficiency. The skills and knowledge required to demonstrate proficiency may be acquired through a series of experiential opportunities embedded in course work, related out-of-school experiences, or by successfully completing a class in one or more art forms. This latter will require a proficiency-based component to be embedded in all arts classes.

## **Technology Content**

Rhode Island High School graduates must demonstrate proficiency in technology based on the National Education Technology Standards for students (NETS) available at [www.CNET.ISTE.org/students/s\\_stands.html](http://www.CNET.ISTE.org/students/s_stands.html). These standards are consistent with and extend those indicators found in *RI's Common Core of Learning for a New Century* – which include competency in acquiring, organizing, evaluating, interpreting, and communicating information. Using a set of integrated strategies, high schools in Rhode Island must provide opportunities for all students to become technology-literate based on performance indicators describing technology competence through exhibition of skills.

Technology skills are developed by coordinated activities that support learning throughout a student's education. These skills are to be introduced, reinforced, and finally mastered, and thus, integrated into an individual's personal learning and social framework. They represent essential, realistic, and attainable goals for lifelong learning and a productive citizenry. The skills and knowledge required to demonstrate proficiency may be acquired through a series of experiential opportunities embedded in course work, related out-of-school experiences, or by taking a specific computer class. This latter method will require a proficiency-based component to be embedded in all technology classes.

One integrated way of ensuring that students will learn, develop, and utilize skills with technology is to require a technological component to be **part of an exhibition** or to require the development of an **electronic portfolio**. Districts and local communities will need to provide the personnel and resources for students to learn the necessary information and practice their technological skills. Additionally, students may demonstrate proficiency in technology using out-of-school experiences, such as demonstrated work experience designing Web pages or writing compute programs among other methods.

## **Appendix B: Universal Design for Rhode Island's Learning and Teaching Community (UDLTC)**

To be held accountable to graduation proficiency requirements, **all** students must have meaningful access to and participation in the curriculum and instruction. Opportunity to learn the content standards must be provided to all students, including those with diverse backgrounds, learning styles and abilities. Performance based assessments, themselves, must be fair and equitable. In a diverse classroom, no single method can reach all learners. Multiple pathways to achieving goals are needed. Universal Design for Learning is a framework for ensuring that all students have the opportunity to learn by designing curriculum, instruction and assessment, from the beginning, to be accessible and equitable to the widest possible number of students.

The Universal Design for Learning (UDL) model developed by the Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST), draws upon and extends principles of universal design as used in architecture and product design whereby structures are conceived, designed and constructed to accommodate a variety of users without a need to retrofit. Architects practicing universal design create structures that accommodate the widest spectrum of users possible. In universally designed environments adaptability is subtle and integrated into the design. Designing for the divergent needs of individuals increases usability for everyone. The curb cut is a classic example. Although they were originally designed to help those in wheel chairs negotiate curbs, curb cuts ease travel for those pushing carriages, riding skateboards, pulling suitcases, or simply walking.

Applied to education, the goal of universal design is to assist schools to address the needs of a diverse student population in a learning environment designed from the outset to be responsive to the academic and social emotional learning needs of the entire student population. The intent is to look at ways of increasing learning opportunities and narrowing the achievement gap within a standards based curriculum.

No two students learn the same way. Within the typical range of performance and ability students vary greatly in their ability to see, hear, move, read, write, attend, organize, focus, engage and remember. Applying universal design to learning materials and activities can increase access for all learners. For example, using only a lecture format for students with language based learning difficulties will severely limit their access to the curriculum or content being taught. The same material can be presented in a variety of ways - such as using project based learning groups to provide much different opportunities for all students to interact with the content being taught. Also well-designed exhibitions and portfolios provide all students with a wide range of options to demonstrate what they know or are able to do.

Many teachers recognize the pressing need to adapt their instruction, and use their time to plan and implement the adaptations. The advantage of UDL is that the curriculum has been pre-designed considering the needs of a diverse classroom. The curriculum has built-in means for the teacher to present the subject matter so that each student can have meaningful access to it. Portfolio assessment, if developed well, addresses key components of a universally designed curriculum. Students express what they have learned in various ways and by using relevant content. Portfolios can be designed to assess a wide range of skills that reflect the diversity of students. Curriculum, instruction and assessment therefore do not have to be retrofitted by the teacher.

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The "universal" in universal design does not imply one optimal solution for everyone. Rather, it reflects an awareness of the unique nature of each learner and the need to accommodate differences, creating learning experiences that suit the learner and maximize his or her ability to progress.

Universal Design in education is not another "new" thing. It is a broad framework for thinking about and planning for learning and teaching given an increasingly diverse student population. Rhode Island has been using the CAST model of Universal Design for Learning to align with RI's Comprehensive Education Strategy, the SALT system of accountability, RI Statewide Assessment, High School Regulations and Progressive Support and Intervention. Universal Design for Rhode Island's Learning and Teaching Community includes the following components: *Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment and Environment*. Addressing the four components in a proactive way allows schools to deliberately set up structures to maximize effective learning and teaching.

**CURRICULUM:**

Determine the specific content, skills, and strategies to be learned.

Ask the question, "How will the students access the information?"

Provide flexible media and materials to ensure access to information and to learning.

Motivate and engage the students based on interest, experience, and application.

**INSTRUCTION:**

Provide multiple and flexible methods of presentation.

Provide multiple models of correct performance, multiple opportunities to practice with supports, and flexible opportunities to demonstrate skill.

Provide choices of content and tools, adjustable levels of challenge, choice of reward, choice of learning context - all of which are culturally responsive.

**ASSESSMENT:**

Monitor progress consistent with specific content, skills, strategies and supports.

Provide ongoing evaluation of "what is working and what is not."

Change methods according to the effectiveness and appropriateness of the presentation format, expression methods, and level of engagement of all students. Measures a range of student performance across multiple levels.

**ENVIRONMENT:**

Create a school-wide climate that is safe, caring, and supportive.

Build a **personalized** learning environment (small learning communities, advisories, Individualized Learning Plans, etc).

Teach respect for all learners.

Incorporate the principles of Positive Behavior Interventions and Support and Social Emotional and Behavioral Learning into daily activities.

Use **physical space** to enhance student participation and engagement.

Student-teacher social interactions, classroom climate, and peer group relationships enhance student learning.

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Relying on brain-based research, UDLTC is a crossroads where initiatives in RI such as differentiated instruction, multiple intelligences, personalized learning environments, portfolio assessment and performance based graduation come together. In essence, UDLTC is about providing the Opportunities to Learn. UDLTC is specifically constructed to remove barriers to accessing, participating in and assessing academic content by proactively anticipating the range of supports diverse learners need in order to demonstrate proficiency and application of the learning standards. The UDLTC framework facilitates implementation of the RI Diploma system for **all** students in Rhode Island

<http://www.cast.org/udl/UniversalDesignforLearning361.cfm>

<http://www.cast.org/teachingeverystudent/toolkits/>



## **Appendix C: Problem Solving Approach**

Support for student learning is being re-conceptualized as an expanding circle of support that begins with the teacher and parent and grows to include other people's efforts if needed. Any of a variety of professionals (including special educators) - individually and as members of support teams - may lend their experience and knowledge to help the teacher design what is needed for children to learn within the general education setting. Documentation of efforts made and their results provides the background needed as additional people enter the circle of support. None of this can occur without the collaboration of general and special education educators, administrators and programs.

The steps of a problem-solving process are not new. What is new is the focus on aggressively using a problem-solving approach in addressing needs of individuals, classes, schools and districts. Problems are identified (clarified in terms of target and actual performance); strategies are developed to address them; measurements are designed to evaluate progress; plans for who will do what, when and where are devised; plans are carried out; results are evaluated; and the ensuing analysis informs the next round of instruction and intervention. The problem-solving approach is as fundamental to the success of the new direction as are comprehensive curriculum programs. ALL educators must be prepared to utilize the problem-solving approach in various situations, including special education service delivery and progress reporting.

Anyone involved in planning to help a student learn needs to have sufficient knowledge of the general education program to effectively contribute to a discussion of the expectations for this student's performance. Participants also need to be able to review evidence on the ways this student learns most successfully. Similarly, information is needed on what has been learned about the environmental conditions and supports that help this student perform. Finally, interventions provided for the student need to be evaluated for integrity of implementation – were they carried out as designed? Were the designs of sufficient specificity and duration to provide a genuine measure of effect?

Evidence is needed on how unique this student's performance is compared to peers. Is this student's performance significantly different than his/her peers'? In what ways? Or from identified standards? How much, in what specific areas? Does the student's own performance differ markedly in different areas? In what ways? To what degrees?

How significantly does what this student needs differ from provision of curriculum and instruction in the comprehensive general education program, which includes comprehensive evidence-based instruction, differentiation of instruction, supplemental classroom instruction and accommodations and precise measurement of progress? Evidence in this area tells people who are helping with planning for this student how s/he needs to be taught, and what it takes for him/her to be successful.

## Appendix D: Glossary

### ***Applied learning***

Outcomes (knowledge, skills, and cognitive activities) needed to establish standards, instruction, and assessments that guide student proficiencies in the capabilities they need to be well prepared for college, life, and work. Applied learning represents the knowledge, skills, roles, and contexts needed to use content knowledge in authentic ways. Under RI's Diploma System applied learning is defined as: communicating (reading, writing, speaking); problem solving; critical thinking; research; personal/social responsibility; and, interpersonal interactions.

### ***Applied Learning standards***

Domains for assessment and reporting of student achievement which include problem solving, communication tools and techniques, information tools and techniques, learning and self-management tools and techniques, and tools and techniques for working with others. (*New Standards, 1997, p. 106*)

### ***Authentic assessments***

Alternatives to conventional, multiple-choice, and true-false testing that both mirror and measure how well students use knowledge, skills and competencies to solve real world tasks and problems. Examples include exhibitions, performance, written or oral responses, journals and portfolios.

### ***Capstone project***

In-depth, independent learning experience that enables students to investigate an area of interest. The capstone presentation is a required component of a capstone project and offers students an opportunity to showcase their work to an external audience. In Rhode Island, these projects are the culminating event for achieving a Certificate of Initial Mastery.

### ***Career academy***

School within a school or small learning community that offers students academic programs organized around broad career themes. Often integrating classroom instruction with work-based learning, academies try to equip students with the necessary skills for both workforce entry and post-secondary admission. Curricula are often planned with the assistance of business partners who suggest program structure, provide classroom speakers, host school field trips, and provide mentors for individual students. Students may be placed in jobs related to their field of study in the summer, and may spend some part of their senior year participating in a work-experience program. These experiences are often structured as "internships".

### ***Career and Technical Education***

Sequence of courses designed to prepare students for an occupation or a cluster of courses in an occupational area. At the secondary level, career and technical education students are those Grade 7 - 12 students who have enrolled in any courses or programs, including exploratory courses, that fall within the definition of a career major or career pathway. The US Department of Education has identified 16 career clusters that both represent career opportunities for the 21<sup>st</sup> century and serve as organizational structures to frame student experiences.

### ***Carnegie Unit***

Term used to define the amount of work normally covered in 200 minutes weekly in class for a period of one year. It is the equivalent of 200 minutes per week per unit. For the purposes of the RI Diploma System, what happens within that time frame is far more important than the time itself.

### ***Certificate of Initial Mastery (CIM)***

Certificate of student accomplishment that takes place when performance is demonstrated, generally at or about grade 10 or age 16 rather than after a predetermined number of years in school. A CIM represents demonstrated knowledge and skills agreed upon by educators, families, business, community and higher

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education representatives; reflects a standard of quality that is competitive throughout the world and demonstrated through real performance, recorded and documented either directly or as close to representing the real performance possible. A combination of traditional tests, performance measures, collections of student work over time, and projects or exhibitions. Students create a portfolio that provides first hand evidence of the learning needed to award the certificate. The CIM provides the students with a forum for analyzing, synthesizing, and implementing the skills and knowledge that they have gained throughout their education. The main components of the CIM designed and implemented through the Rhode Island Skills Commission are:

- On-demand tasks in mathematics and English Language Arts
- Extended tasks in mathematics and English Language Arts
- Capstone project built around Applied Learning Standards from the National Center on Education and the Economy
- *New Standards Reference Examination* assessment results

### ***Common task***

Structured opportunity that is common for a group of students to demonstrate learning through written products and/or oral presentations. They allow a student to prove that s/he has mastered one or more proficiencies based upon deep content knowledge. The proficiencies are those that are generally agreed upon as crucial or important, and are defined by standards and expectations. Thus, part of what makes a task valid is its explicit relation to standard(s) and expectation(s) endorsed by the school, the district, the state (content standards, learner outcomes, the *New Standards Performance Standards*, and the RI Grade Span Expectations). A task may be an on demand or extended task.

- On demand tasks are typically given timed, controlled setting
- Extended tasks require a longer period of time to ensure opportunities for revision and reflection.

In terms of the RI Diploma System, common tasks may serve as components of a student's graduation portfolio, or as the proficiency component of end of course exams, or as preparation for a student's graduation exhibition. Common tasks also play an important instructional role by providing teachers diagnostic information that should be used to shape curriculum to improve further learning and teaching.

### ***Common Core of Learning***

Knowledge, skills, and competencies that all students should learn to succeed in post-secondary education and work. They represent broad foundation statements that embody what learners should know and be able to do to meet the opportunities and challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. RI's *Common Core of Learning for a New Century* was recently revised and must inform the development of proficiency-based graduation requirements.

### ***Community service learning***

Instructional reform strategy that actively involves youth in an academic program through service to their communities. Service-learning is a method whereby students learn and develop through active participation in thoughtfully organized service that:

- is conducted in and meets the needs of a community;
- is coordinated with a secondary school and with the community;
- helps foster civic responsibility;
- is integrated into and enhances the academic curriculum of the students; and
- includes structured time for the students to reflect on the service experience as a part of their career development exposure.

### ***Content standards***

Broadly stated expectations of what students need to know, understand and be able to do in a specific content area such as English language arts or mathematics. Content standards define for teachers, schools, students, and the community not only the expected student skills and knowledge, but also what schools should teach.

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### ***Criteria***

Guidelines, rules, characteristics, or dimensions that are used to judge the quality of student performance. Criteria are descriptions of the most important features of a learning goal, content standard or opportunity-to-learn standard that can be used to judge what students know and are able to do. Scoring rubrics are based on criteria and define what the criteria mean and how they are used.

### ***Diploma assessments***

Components of the RI Diploma System. They refer to the multiple measures that were outlined in the RI Board of Regents High School Regulations—exhibitions, portfolios, Certificates of Initial Mastery. These assessments concurrently measure deep content knowledge and the habits of thinking, reasoning, applying, problem solving, critical-thinking that are part of in-depth long-term work. They are purposefully designed to both mirror and measure how well students use knowledge, skills and competencies to solve real-world tasks and problems.

### ***End-of-course exams (proficiency-based)***

Summative assessments designed to ascertain what students know and are able to do relative to course of study. They are purposefully designed to include proficiency-based measures of performance. They may include multiple choice and true / false responses. At least 50 percent of the test must include on-demand or extended tasks based on the expectations for student learning that provide the foundation of knowledge and skills for the course.

### ***Exhibition (Graduation)***

Broad term used to capture the demonstration of learning that occurs in both physical or written products and oral presentations. A Graduation Exhibition is an in-depth, extended project requiring the student to simultaneously demonstrate that s/he has mastered deep content knowledge and the habits of thinking that are expected of a graduate of that school. An exhibition often takes place in a student's senior year, but may take place at any time in his/her high school experience. The exhibition draws on a personal academic focus of the student, explores a topic through in-depth research, represents the acquisition and use of knowledge in new ways, is completed individually, demonstrates one or more of the school's identified expectations for learning, is presented to an external audience, has opportunities for revision, documents the process, and offers opportunities for reflection.

### ***Grade Span Expectations***

Statements of the reading, writing, and math content knowledge and skills expected of all students for Grades 9-10 and 11-12. They are intended to capture the “big ideas” of English Language Arts and mathematics content areas and identify which GSEs are intended for large-scale assessment by the state, and which are for local assessment purposes only. Science GSEs are under development.

### ***Individualized Learning Plans (ILPs)***

Tools that help customize and direct student development in three domains: academic, career, and personal/social. ILPs are a mapped academic plan and profile that reflect each student's unique set of interests, needs, learning goals, and graduation requirements.

### ***Learner outcomes***

Descriptions of what students should know and be able to do after completing a unit, a program, a grade, or a school. They represent the minimum knowledge that students must demonstrate to be proficient with the standards and expectations for student learning. They are assessed with performance indicators.

### ***Local assessments***

Assessments developed, administered, and scored by educators with the purpose of evaluating individual, classroom, grade or school level student performance on a topic. Ideally, the results of a local assessment are used to inform and influence instruction that helps students reach high standards.

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### ***Local Assessment System***

Coherent, coordinated collection of assessments that are aligned to content and performance standards. Together they form a body of evidence that yield data about students' progress toward mastery of the expectations for student learning and other learning targets. In Rhode Island, an assessment system may consist of classroom assessments, diploma assessments, district assessments, state assessments, and alternative assessments, among others.

### ***Multiple measures of performance***

Multiple determinations within the RI Diploma System that measure students' proficiency. They must be made from a variety of assessments and students must have multiple opportunities to exhibit their proficiency.

### ***Opportunities to learn***

Conditions in schools (what schools and teachers must provide in programs, instruction, resources, materials, and instruction) that enable all students to have a fair opportunity to achieve the knowledge, skills, and understandings set out in the expectations for student learning. They address such areas as curriculum, instruction, assessment, technology, a safe environment, and professional development, among others. They can include what is taught, how it is taught, by whom, and with what resources.

### ***Performance-based assessment***

Requirement that students demonstrate achievement and skills in an active manner. It may be creating an answer or developing a product. How the problem answered or the product designed reveals a student's understanding of and ability to apply the underlying processes. It usually includes self-assessment and measures non-traditional areas of integrating knowledge across disciplines, contribution to group work, and planning response to a novel situation.

### ***Performance indicators***

Component of learner outcomes that defines the stages of achievement towards meeting the content and performance standard for the expectations for student learning.

### ***Performance standard***

Agreed upon level of acceptable accomplishment for an area of student learning, and exemplified by a benchmark set of student work. Standards are characterized by high expectations of what is acceptable for all learners. Performance standards describe how "good is good enough", that is, how well a student has to perform to achieve or exceed the standard.

### ***Portfolio (Graduation)***

Part of a school's Local Diploma System. It is composed of a specific subset of student work tied to the school's learning expectations and the state's high school diploma system requirements. The evidence collected demonstrates that a student has the skills and knowledge expected of any graduate from that school. The graduation portfolio requires formative and summative student reflections and a final evaluation by a panel of trained reviewers. Students collect work from their courses and learning experiences/activities over four years and then choose a subset of those entries that best reflects their learning and demonstrates a defined set of proficiencies.

### ***Portfolio (print or electronic)***

Collection of work that documents a student's educational performance over time. A portfolio typically includes a range of materials (e.g., reports, photographs) selected by the student and may include a brief introduction and summary statement describing how the portfolio was assembled and what was learned in the

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compilation process. Portfolios can be designed to assess student progress, effort, and/or achievement, and encourage students to reflect on their learning. A portfolio becomes an assessment when (1) the assessment purpose is defined; (2) criteria or methods are made clear for determining what is put into the portfolio, by whom, and when; and (3) criteria for assessing either the collection or individual pieces of work are identified and used to make judgments about performance.

### ***Reliability***

Degree to which the results of an assessment are dependable and consistently measure particular student knowledge and/or skills. Reliability is an indication of the consistency of scores across raters, over time, or across different tasks or items that measure the same thing.

### ***RI Diploma System***

Combination of all of the assessment measures, student supports, and school and district requirements that a school uses to show what students know and are able to do. Components for graduation required by these regulations include, completion of a minimum of 20 credits, Diploma Assessments (Exhibition, Capstone Project, End of Course Exams, etc.) chosen by the school, local assessments, and state assessments. Each school's Diploma System must demonstrate that a student graduating from that school is proficient in rigorous content knowledge and applied learning skills; It is the school's responsibility to provide each student with the necessary and appropriate support and "opportunities to learn" in order for them to develop the knowledge and skills needed to prepare them for success in post-secondary learning experiences and in the work place.

### ***Standards***

Broadest of a family of terms referring to statements of expectations for student learning, including content standards, performance standards, and benchmarks.

### ***State approved local standards and assessment systems***

Performance benchmarks on state-approved local assessment systems based on state-approved local standards.

### ***Validity***

Extent to which an assessment measures what it is supposed to measure and the extent to which inferences and actions made on the basis of test scores are appropriate and accurate. A valid standards-based assessment is aligned with the standards intended to be measured; provides an accurate and reliable estimate of students' performance relative to the standard; and is fair. An assessment cannot be valid if it is not reliable.

### ***Work-based learning***

Activities at the high school level that involve actual work experience or connect classroom learning to work. The first level of exposure to work-based learning might occur in the academic and vocational programs (including cooperative education, distributive education, or vocational courses) that do not offer work site experience. The next level of exposure may entail the integration of academic and vocational/occupational curricula, as in the case of tech prep programs, and may include work site experience. At the highest level, there is full integration of academic and vocational/occupational curriculum with work site experience.

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Appendix E: High School Diploma System Implementation Timeline

***FEBRUARY 2004- 2005***

<b>February 2004</b>	<b>March - May 2004</b>	<b>April – November 2004</b>	<b>December 2004</b>	<b>January 2005</b>	<b>February 2005</b>
<p>(Regents' High-School Regulations Passed in January 2003)</p> <p>Initial Guidance (5.0) for Diploma System issued by RIDE</p> <p>Districts continue to implement High-School Regulations based on January 2003 Regents' Regulations</p>	<p>PBGR/ Gates Advisory Committee meetings on-going</p> <p>Districts select which Diploma System components that they will implement and report to RIDE</p>	<p>Gates Networks formed and provide Statewide Sharing/Co-learning Opportunities</p> <p>Gates work continues and RI Diploma System Steering Committee continues work</p> <p>Districts continue their refinement of their Diploma System components for class of 2008</p> <p>Districts begin work with class of 2008 students and designing their PBGR requirements</p>	<p>RIDE disseminates Rhode Island Diploma System overview</p> <p>RIDE meeting with districts on status of the RI Diploma System</p>	<p>RIDE hosts regional technical- assistance sessions with districts using Diploma System/ GSE materials</p> <p>- Districts meet with grade 9 students and parents to describe their PBGR system</p> <p>- RIDE PBGR Technical Assistance Bulletin disseminated</p>	<p>RIDE hosts Technical- Assistance sessions using Diploma System TA/GSE materials</p> <p>Districts develop framework for their local PBGR criteria and quality standards based on RIDE guidelines issued in January 2005</p>

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***FEBRUARY 2005 – JULY 2006***

<b>February 2005</b>	<b>March 2005</b>	<b>April – June 2005</b>	<b>July 2005 – July 2006</b>
<p>Districts develop framework for their local Diploma System components based on criteria and quality standards</p> <p>RIDE Regional workshops to share Diploma System Technical Assistance Bulletin with Districts/schools- alignment clinics</p>	<p>RIDE Diploma System Peer-Review criteria draft disseminated and explained to districts</p> <p>RIDE HS conducts visits as requested by districts/schools</p>	<p>Districts ensure class of 2008 students/ families are “on course” and aware of PBGR components</p> <p>Schools ensure class of 2008 Opportunities to Learn are present</p> <p>RIDE to provide Technical Assistance clinics/workshops</p> <p>RIDE visits high schools to review progress</p> <p>Finalization of grade 9-10 GSEs ELA/Math (Regents’ Adoption)</p>	<p>Practice Peer Review Process and Criteria with focus on ELA and math</p> <p>Districts may submit their Graduation Requirements and Diploma System to Commissioner/RIDE for early review and feedback</p>



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**DIPLOMA SYSTEM IMPLEMENTATION  
SCHEDULE  
*JULY 2006 – JULY 2012***

<b>July 2007</b>	<b>July 2008</b>	<b>July 2009</b>	<b>July 2010</b>	<b>July 2011</b>	<b>July 2012</b>
Diploma System Peer Review (focus on ELA/Math)  Practice Peer Review for SS, the Arts, and technology	Diploma System Peer Review in science  Districts submit entire Diploma System to RIDE  Commissioner's Review Focus on Science	Diploma System Peer Review in social studies, arts, and technology	Diploma System Peer Review in English language arts, math, science  Commissioner's Review focus on SS, the arts and technology	Comprehensive Diploma System Peer Review for half of districts	Comprehensive Diploma System Peer Review for remaining half of districts

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***DIPLOMA SYSTEM  
PROFICIENCY EMPHASIS FOR  
COMMISSIONER REVIEW***

2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
ELA, Math	ELA, Math	ELA, Math, Science	ELA, Math, Science, Arts, Technology, Social Studies	All Areas

**Note:** The class of 2008 must be proficient in all six areas. However, proficiency in English Language Arts and mathematics must coincide with the proficiency description defined by RIDE and will be the focus of the Commissioner's Peer Review in 2006. The other four areas will be locally determined but generally focused on descriptions offered in the Diploma System 5.0 Guidance (February 2004), Diploma System Overview (December 2004), and from the Technical Assistance Bulletin, to be published in January 2005.

**Note:** In the years 2013 and 2014, all high schools in Rhode Island will have added fully endorsed PBGR components to their Diploma System, which will also meet the federal NCLB criteria for ensuring that all students (100 percent) are proficient in English language arts and mathematics by 2014. Science assessment will be required for proficiency evidence but is not needed for AYP